

REMARKS

The Written Opinion dated July 13, 2004 has been received. Claims 3-8 and 10 were considered to meet the criteria with respect to novelty and inventive step. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 11-14 were considered to lack an inventive step under Article 33(3) and as being anticipated by or obvious in view of U.S. Patent 903,280 to Farrell. The claims have been reviewed and amended. Reconsideration is requested in view of the following comments.

The present invention is directed to a method of connecting first and second bodies, each having aligning bores. An elongate connection structure is provided on the first body, and the axial length of the connection structure on the first body is selectively reduced such that the connection structure terminates at a desired axial connection location. The second body is then connected with the first body.

The Examiner contends that Farrell discloses selectively reducing the axial length of the connection structure 4, and references page 1, lines 79-90 and page 2, lines 28-41. As disclosed in this patent, the connection structure 4 is never selectively reduced in its axial length. To the contrary, the axial length of the connection structure 4 remains constant. Instead, Farrell discloses selectively positioning an adjustment stop 5, so that the relative position of body 1 with respect to body 3 may be controlled.

Farrell discloses a scheme for selectively limiting the threading of one body to the other, but this procedure does not involve selectively reducing the axial length of either body. Farrell discloses adjusting the thread length which is effectively used, but the axial length of threads is not changed. Both the bodies 3 and the bodies 1 remain in their original condition, and only the position of one body relative to the other is adjusted. This is markedly dissimilar to the method of the present invention, which


selectively cuts the first body to reduce the axial length of the connection structure, e.g., by cutting off a portion of the connection structure on the first body not desired. This is clearly set forth in the amended claims.

Claim 13 has been amended to be directed to connecting a first body having a first bore with a flange having a second bore. The claim further recites selectively cutting the first body to reduce the axial length of the connection structure, and connecting the flange with the first body at the desired axial connection location. Applicant submits that Claim 13 is patentably distinguishable from the cited reference. Dependent Claims 15-19 are directed to further features of the method recited in Claim 13.

Independent Claim 14 similarly recites selectively cutting the first body to reduce the axial length of the connection structure, connecting the second body at the desired axial connection location with the first body, connecting a tubular member with the second body, and sealing between the second body and the tubular member at a location radially inward of the connection structure on the first body. The cited reference does not teach the method as recited in Claim 14, including selectively cutting the first body to reduce its axial length and sealing between the second body and the tubular member at a location radially inward of the connection structure on the first body. Dependent Claims 20-25 recite further features of the method as set forth in Claim 14.

Revised Claims 1-25 follow on pages 10-12.

Respectfully submitted,


Loren G. Helmreich
Reg. No. 29,389

Date: 29 July, 2004

BROWNING BUSHMAN P.C.
5718 Westheimer, Suite 1800
Houston, Texas 77057
Tel: (713) 266-5593
Fax : (713) 266-5169

CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence and all referenced enclosures are being sent via facsimile to the United States PTO, Attention David P. Bryant, 703-305-3230 on this the 29th day of July, 2004.

By:


Martha Jeffers

Marked Up Version of Claims

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method of connecting a first body having a first bore with a first axis and a second body having a second bore and a second axis substantially aligned with the first axis, comprising:

providing an elongate connection structure on the first body;

selectively ~~reducing~~ cutting the first body to reduce an axial length of the connection structure on the first body, such that the connection structure terminates at a desired axial connection location; and

connecting the second body with the first body.

2. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the elongate connection structure comprises a plurality of grooves about the first body.

3. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 2, wherein the plurality of grooves comprises an externally threaded area along the first body.

4. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 3, wherein the second body comprises a second flange having an internally threaded connection member; and connecting the second body with the first body comprises threadably engaging the internally threaded connection member with the externally threaded area along the first body.

5. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 3, further comprising:
connecting another flange with the second flange.

6. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 5, further comprising:
positioning an insulating material between the second flange and the another
flange, to electrically insulate between the second flange and the another flange.

7. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 5, further comprising:
positioning an insulating material between the first body and the another flange,
to insulate between the first body and the another flange.

8. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 5, further comprising:
providing one or more threaded members for joining the second flange
and the another flange; and
positioning an insulating material between the another flange and the one or
more threaded members, to insulate between the another flange and the one or more
threaded members.

9. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the first body is one of the
group consisting of an upper and lower body, and the second body is the other of the
group consisting of the upper and lower body.

10. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 2, wherein connecting the second body to the first body comprises:

providing a radially movable latch member with the second body, the latch member comprising teeth adapted to engage the grooves about the first body; and moving the latch member radially inward to engage the grooves about the first body.

11. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein connecting the second body with the first body follows reducing the axial length of the connection structure.

12. **(Original)** A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein reducing the axial length of the connection structure follows connecting the second body with the first body.

13. **(Currently Amended)** A method of connecting a first body having a first bore with a first axis and a ~~second body~~flange having a second bore and a second axis substantially aligned with the first axis, comprising:

providing an elongate connection structure on the first body;

~~connecting the second body with the first body below a desired axial connection location;~~

~~selectively reducing~~cutting the first body to reduce an axial length of the

connection structure on the first body, such that the connection structure terminates at the desired axial connection location; and

~~connecting~~repositioning the second body flange with the first body at the desired axial connection location.

14. **(Currently Amended)** A method of connecting a first body having a first bore with a first axis and a second body having a second bore and a second axis substantially aligned with the first axis, comprising:

providing an elongate connection structure on the first body;

~~connecting the second body at a desired axial connection location with the first body; and~~

selectively ~~reducing~~cutting the first body to reduce an axial length of the connection structure on the first body, such that the connection structure terminates at the desired axial connection location;

connecting the second body at the desired axial connection location with the first body;

connecting a tubular member with the second body; and

sealing between the second body and the tubular member at a location radially inward at the connection structure on the first body.

15. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 13, wherein the elongate connection structure comprises a plurality of grooves on an external surface of the first body.

16. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 13, further comprising:

connecting another flange with the flange; and

connecting one or more tubular members with the another flange.

17. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising:

positioning an electrical insulating material between the flange and the another flange.

18. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising:

positioning an electrical insulating material between the first body and the another flange.

19. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 16, further comprising:

providing one or more threaded members for joining the flange and the another flange; and

positioning an insulating material between the another flange and the one or more threaded members.

20. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 14, wherein the second body is a flange, and another flange on the tubular member is connected with the second body.

21. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 20, further comprising:

positioning an electrical insulating material between the flange and the another flange.

22. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 20, further comprising:

positioning an electrical insulating material between the first body and the another flange.

23.**(New)** A method as defined in Claim 14, wherein the elongate connection structure comprises a plurality of grooves on an external surface of the first body.

24. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 14, further comprising:

providing one or more threaded members for joining the flange and another flange on the tubular member; and

positioning an insulating material between the another flange and the one or more threaded members.

25. **(New)** A method as defined in Claim 14, wherein connecting the second body to the first body comprises:

providing a radially movable latch member with the second body, the latch member comprising teeth adapted to engage the grooves about the first body; and

moving the latch member radially inward to engage the grooves about the first body.